Quality of Life

QUALITY OF LIFE

Development Patterns

Why is it important?

▲▲ **Different patterns of development lead to different outcomes with respect to livability, economic efficiency and environmental sustainability. For example, a more compact development pattern generally improves accessibility to various activities and maximizes the utilization of existing infrastructure. It also makes better use of existing urban "footprints" hence limits the environmental impacts of development.[1] ▲▲**

How are we doing?

Patterns of development could have three levels of meanings. First, we have the "urban form" which describes the way in which the metropolitan area is organized in spatial terms, focusing at a large geographical level of analysis. Second, "density" whether residential or employment, focuses on transit corridors and station areas. Finally, "land use mix and urban design" encompasses both the characteristics and arrangements of land use on a relatively small scale, including the specific design features associated with these land uses at the neighborhood level.[2]

In 2002, a peer-reviewed study conducted by Smart Growth America, a non-profit organization, offered the most comprehensive assessment of the metropolitan development patterns in the nation.[3] A total of 83 metropolitan areas were included in the study. The study defined sprawling development pattern based on four factors that can be measured: residential density, strength of downtowns and activity centers, neighborhood mix of homes, jobs and services, and accessibility of the street network. The scores based on each of the four factors were combined to calculate the overall Sprawl Index. The average index score is 100 with lower scores indicating poorer performance and more sprawl.

Among the 83 metropolitan areas, Riverside/San Bernardino counties ranked as the most sprawling area, Ventura County ranked 9th, Orange County ranked 41st and Los Angeles County ranked 45th (see Figure 75 page 92). Imperial County is not part of the study. Among the four factors examined, Los Angeles and Orange counties actually scored quite well with regard to the three factors dealing with density, neighborhood mix of homes, jobs and services, and accessibility of the street network. However, neither counties scored well regarding the strength of centers. In a sense, what is missing is the urban form level regarding the macro organization of the metropolitan area.

The Inland Empire (Riverside/San Bernardino counties), however, did not score well with respect to all four factors. Specifically, Riverside/San Bernardino counties have few areas that serve as town centers or focal points for the community. For example, more than 66 percent of the population live over ten miles from a central business district.[4] In addition, there is little mixing of homes with other uses in these two counties. For example, the study found that only 28 percent of residents in the

Inland Empire live within one-half block of any businesses or institutions. The street network in the Inland counties is also not well connected with 70 percent of the blocks larger than traditional urban size. Finally, the residential density in the Inland counties is also below average.

Overall, the SCAG region would earn a score less than 100 indicating a more sprawling development pattern than the majority of the 83 metropolitan areas studied. In addition, the region is still growing rapidly, expecting to add six million new residents by 2030. The region's ability to manage future growth is critical for a less sprawling development pattern and improved livability and environmental sustainability for the entire region.

Since 2000, SCAG has been undertaking a growth visioning program – Southern California Compass. It is a multi-year effort to consider the future growth of the region through an informed and analytically-based policy framework. The effort is directed by the Growth Visioning Subcommittee of SCAG. The purpose and goal of the program is to fashion a preferred growth scenario that will guide SCAG's future planning efforts and serve as an implementation guide for development and land use decision making for other agencies. Each of SCAG's 14 subregions is an active participant in the program. The four principles of Compass include improving mobility for all residents, fostering livability in all communities, enabling prosperity for all people, and promoting sustainability for future generations. The guest essay – The "Commons" in Southern California in this State of the Region Report addresses, among others, how a draft regional growth vision was developed through the Compass process. (See guest essay beginning from page 75. Also see Map 6 page 73 on the age of housing stock in the region)

Education

Why is this important?

▲▲ Student performance is measured through three indicators: 1) test scores for eighth grade, 2) high school dropout rates, and 3) percent of high school graduates completing courses required for the University of California (UC) or California State University (CSU) entrance. High school dropouts are severely disadvantaged in competing for quality jobs. Performance on the last indicator reflects the potential level of success in pursuing college education by high school graduates. ▲▲

Figure 57
Math Test Score for 8th Grade
(Percent above National Median Score)
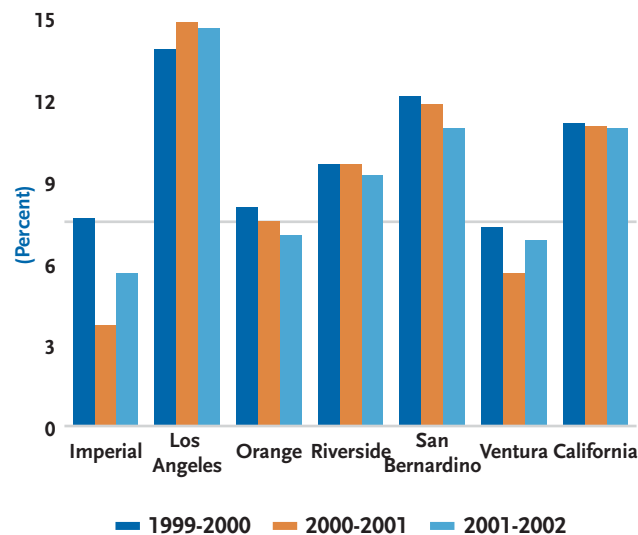

Legend: 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002
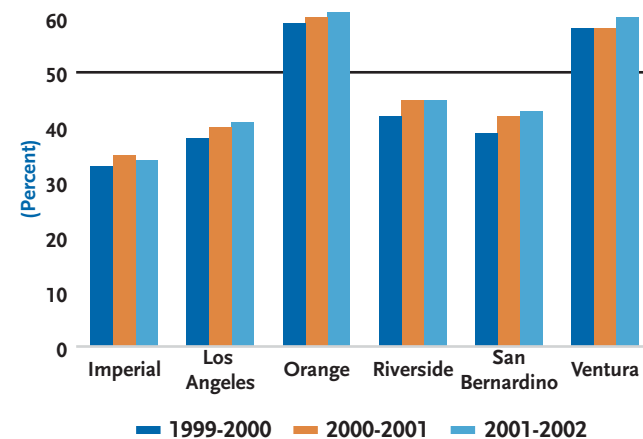
* Standford 9 Test. Performed better than the nation if more than 50% of the students were above the national median

Source: California Department of Education

How are we doing?

In 2002, the 8th graders (graduating class of middle schools) in the region continued to perform below the national median in math and reading test scores except in Orange and Ventura counties (Figure 57 and Figure 57a page 107). Between 2001 and 2002, there were no noticeable changes in reading scores while very slight improvements were made for math scores.

As to the dropout rates for high schools, the region also made slight improvements in 2002 from the previous year with the exception of Imperial and Ventura counties (Figure 58). Hispanic and African American high school students, when compared with their White and Asian peers, had significantly higher dropout rates except in Imperial County (Figure 59). The disparity is much more pronounced in Los Angeles County than in the other counties. Asian students generally had the lowest dropout rates.

Figure 58
Dropout Rates in Public High School

1999-2000 2000-2001 2001-2002

Source: California Department of Education

Figure 59
Dropout Rates in by Race/Ethnicity in Public High School, 2001-2002

Asian Hispanic African American Non-Hispanic White
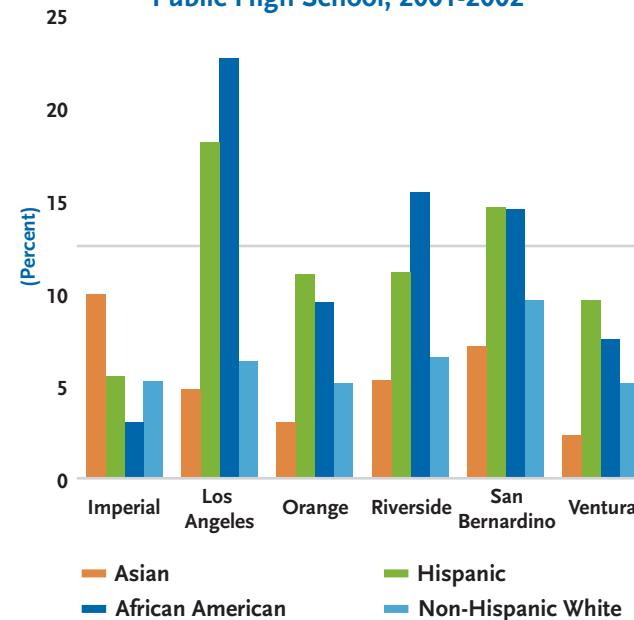
Source: California Department of Education

In 2002, every county in the region had less than 40 percent of high schools graduates complete courses required for University of California (UC) or Cal State University (CSU) entrance (Figure 60). There was slightly lower performance in 2002 than the previous year particularly for Riverside and Ventura counties. There were also similar patterns of racial and ethnic disparities across the six counties in the region (Figure 61). For example, while more than 55 percent of Asian graduates in Orange County completed courses required for UC or CSU entrance, only 15 percent of the Hispanic students achieved the same.

Figure 61

High School Graduates Completing Courses Required for UC or CSU Entrance by Race/Ethnicity, 2001-2002

Source: California Department of Education

Figure 60

High School Graduates Completing Courses Required for UC or CSU Entrance

Source: California Department of Education
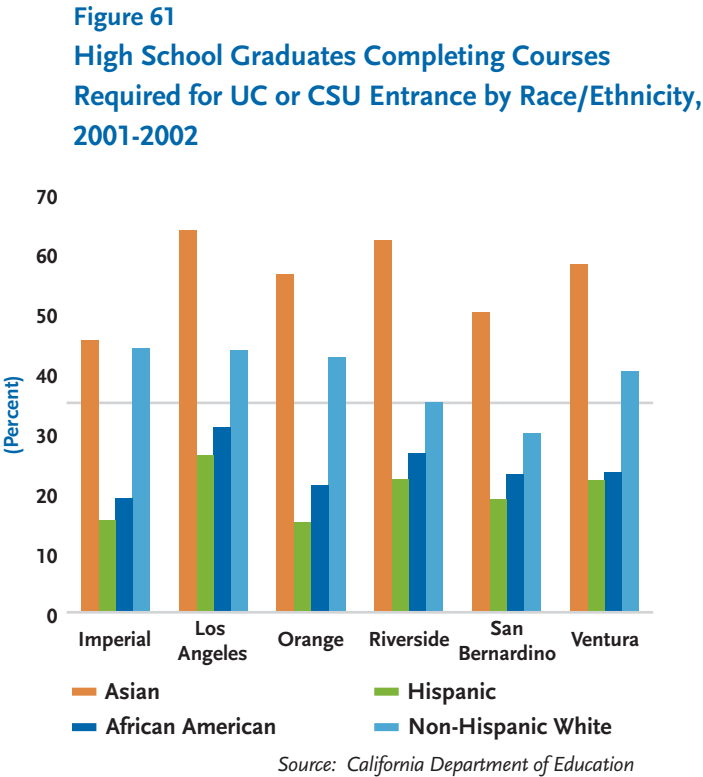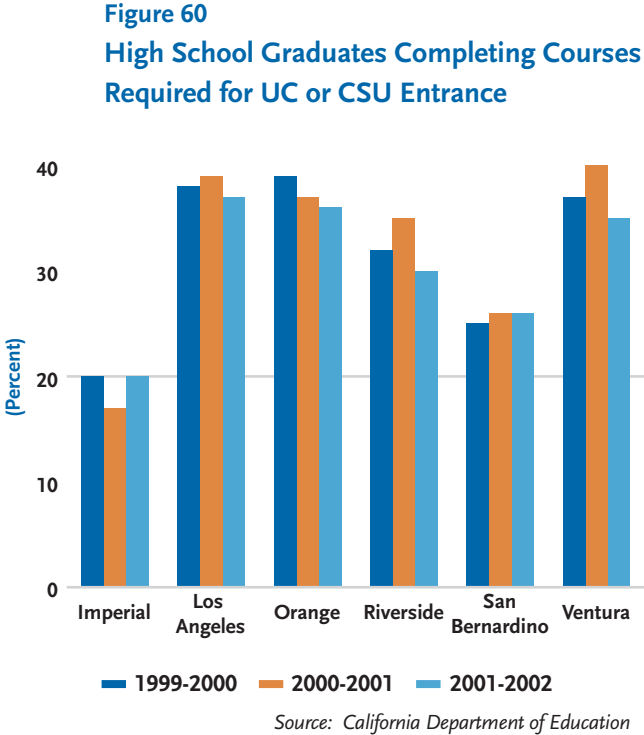
The SCAG region lost ground in educational attainment during the 1990s. Among the nine largest metropolitan regions in the nation, Southern California was the only one which did not make any progress in educational attainment, specifically with respect to the proportion of population 25 years and over who earned at least a high school diploma.[5]

In 2002, there were no noticeable improvements regarding educational attainment in the region. Among the nine largest metropolitan regions, the SCAG region most likely remained in last place in the percentage of adults with at least a high school diploma, and 2nd to last for at least a Bachelor's degree. (See Map 7 page 74 on educational attainment regarding persons with a bachelor's degree or higher.)

Among the different racial and ethnic groups, there are significant disparities as to educational attainment. For example, about 43 percent of the Asian adults in the region achieved at least a Bachelor's degree compared to 18 percent for African American and 7 percent for Hispanic adults. Conversely, about 56 percent of the Hispanic adults did not receive a high school diploma, compared with only 20 percent for African American and 10 percent for non-Hispanic White adults (see Figure 61a page 107).

Public Safety

Why is this important?

▲▲ Crime-related activities consume an enormous amount of valuable social and economic resources. The social costs are real, though less quantifiable, including for example, pain and suffering of crime victims and their families and the weakening of community cohesion. The economic costs include loss of productivity due to death or disability resulting from crime, medical costs, and loss of property values in neighborhoods with high crime rates. ▲▲
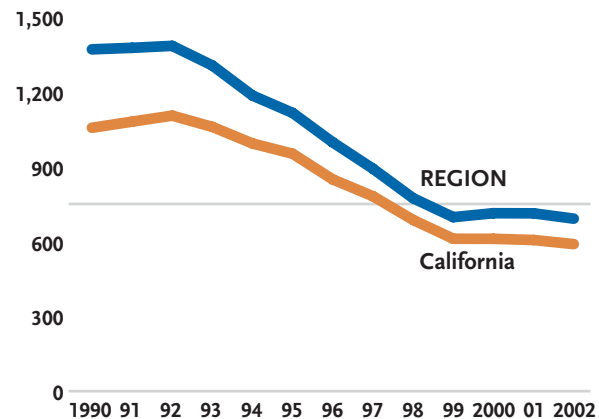
How are we doing?

Violent Crimes

Violent crime rates in both the region and the state peaked in 1992 and have been declining since then, with the exception of a slight increase in 2000 (Figure 62). Violent crimes include homicides, forcible rapes, robberies and aggressive assaults. In 2002, the violent crime rate in the region declined by 3 percent from 2001.
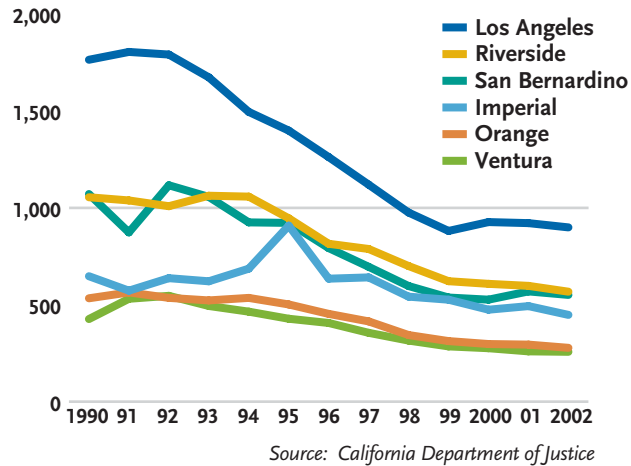
Within the region, violent crime rates declined in every county in 2002, particularly for Imperial County (-9 percent) and Orange County (-6 percent) (Figure 63). Orange and Ventura counties consistently had the lowest rates in violent crimes in the region.

Figure 62
Violent Crimes
(Per 100,000 Population)

Source: California Department of Justice

Source: California Department of Justice

the region has had lower juvenile felony arrest rates compared with the rest of the state. In 2002, the arrest rate was about 40 percent of the 1990 rate. More than 80 percent of the total juvenile arrests were males.

From 2001 to 2002, there were reductions of about 9 percent in juvenile arrest rates in the region. Imperial, Orange and Ventura counties all experienced more reductions in juvenile felony arrest rates than the other counties in the region (Figure 65). The arrest rate in Riverside County declined by two percent in 2002, after increased slightly for two consecutive years.

Los Angeles County continued to be the only county in the region with a significantly higher violent crime rate than the rest of the state. *Violent crime rate in Los Angeles County, though reduced by almost a half since 1990, was still among the highest of large metropolitan counties in the nation (see Figure 76 page 93).*

Juvenile Felony Arrests

Juvenile felony arrest rates for those aged 10 to 17 has continuously been declining in the region since 1990 (Figure 64). A felony offense is defined as a crime which is punishable by death or by imprisonment in a state prison. Beginning in 1992,

Source: California Department of Justice

Figure 65

Juvenile Felony Arrests by County

(Per 100,000 Population Aged 10-17)

- Riverside
- San Bernardino
- Los Angeles
- Orange
- Ventura
- Imperial

Source: California Department of Justice

to race/ethnicity bias followed by about 23 percent for sexual orientation bias and 14 percent for religious bias.

The number of hate crime events and victims in the region declined by almost 30 percent in 2002 from 2001. The year 2001 was the peak year in hate crimes in the last five years due primarily to the September 11 terrorist attacks (Figure 66). It is important to note that for three consecutive years, almost 80 percent of the hate crime events and victims were in Los Angeles County.

In 2002, the region had more than 27,000 juvenile felony arrests. Close to half of the arrests were due to property offenses while less than 30 percent were violent offenses. It should be noted that juvenile arrests in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties were more likely for violent offenses while in Orange and Ventura counties arrests were more likely for property offenses.

Hate Crimes

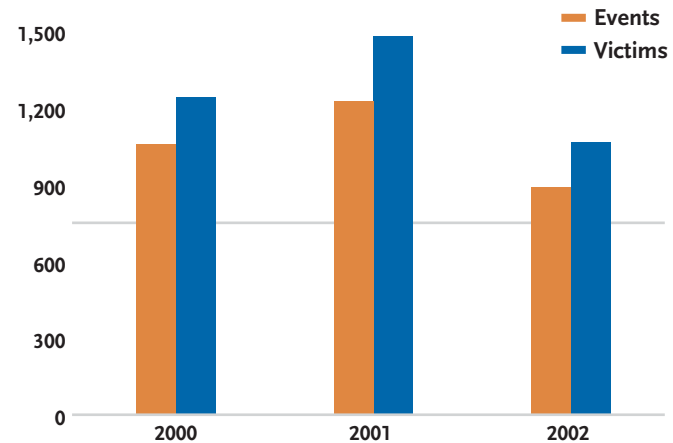Hate crimes impact not only their victims, but also spread fear throughout entire communities. Hate crimes could be in the form of violent crimes (75 percent) or property crimes (25 percent).[5] As to the motivations for hate crimes in 2002, statewide data indicated that more than 60 percent were due
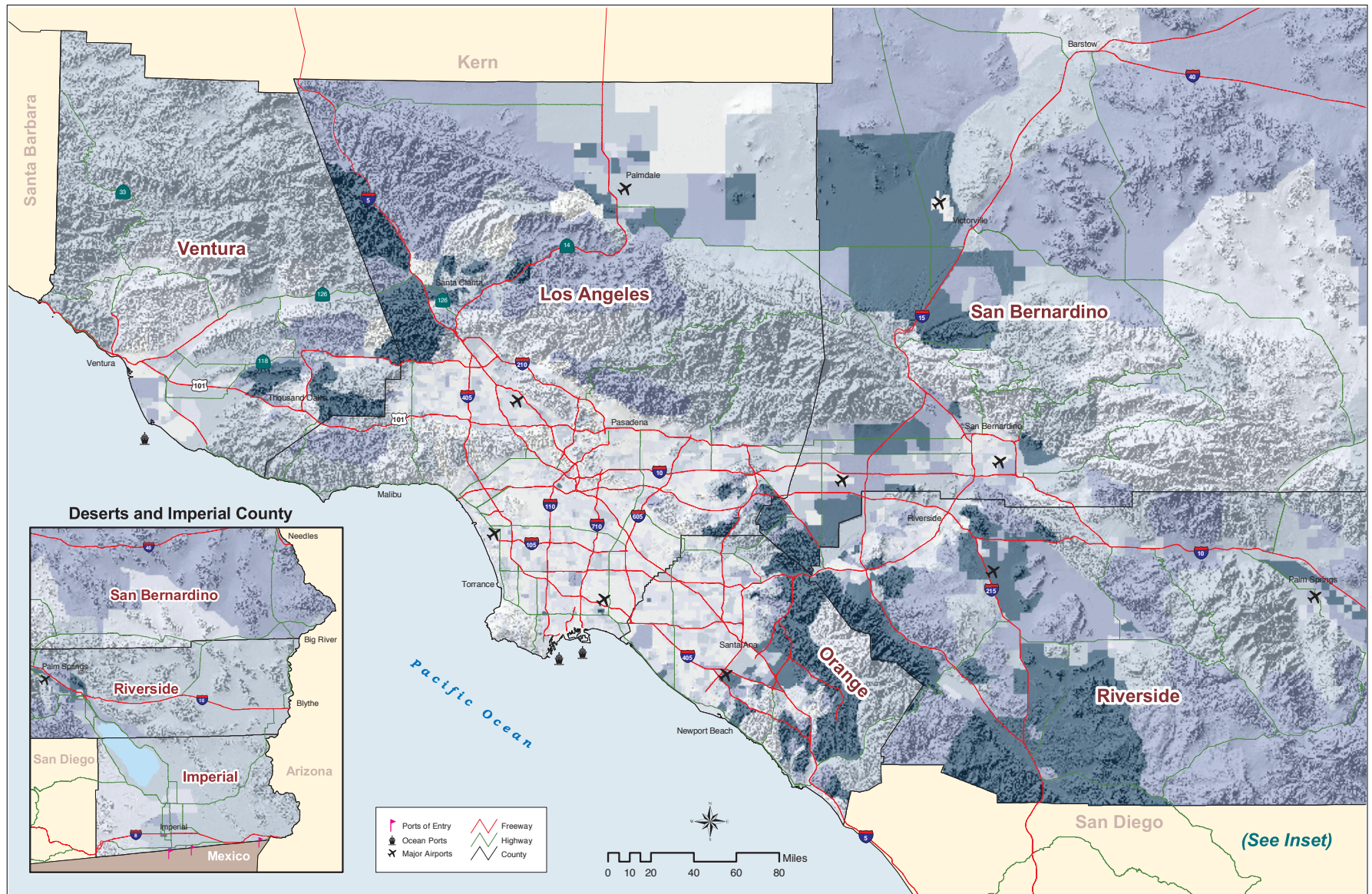
Figure 66

Hate Crime Activities

- Events
- Victims

Source: California Department of Justice

Kern

Santa Barbara

Ventura

Los Angeles

San Bernardino

33

126

Santa Clarita

14

Palmdale

Victorville

Barstow

40

Ventura

118

101

Thousand Oaks

101

210

405

Pasadena

10

San Bernardino

15

Riverside

110

Malibu

105

710

605

215

10

Palm Springs

Torrance

405

Santa Ana

Orange

Riverside

Newport Beach

San Diego

5

(See Inset)

Pacific Ocean

Deserts and Imperial County

40

Needles

San Bernardino

Big River

Palm Springs

Riverside

10

Blythe

San Diego

Imperial

Arizona

8

Imperial

Mexico

N
W E
S

⚑ Ports of Entry		⟋⟍ Freeway
⚓ Ocean Ports		⟋⟍ Highway
✈ Major Airports		⟋⟍ County

Miles
0 10 20   40   60   80

Percent of Housing Built in 1980 or After by Census Tract

- 0% – 10%
- 11% – 25%
- 26% – 50%
- 51% – 75%
- 76% – 100%
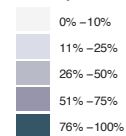
Source: Census 2000,
Thomas Bros. Network

AGE OF HOUSING STOCK
Housing Built in 1980 or After

c:\=state_region2003 11/2003

Map 6

QUALITY OF LIFE

Kern
Barstow
40

Santa Barbara

33
Ventura

126
126
118
101
Ventura
101
Thousand Oaks
Malibu

Santa Clarita
Los Angeles
14
Palmdale

210
405
Pasadena
10

Victorville

15
San Bernardino
San Bernardino

110
710
605
105
Torrance

Pacific Ocean

405
Santa Ana

Riverside
215
10

Palm Springs

Orange

Newport Beach

Riverside

San Diego

5
(See Inset)
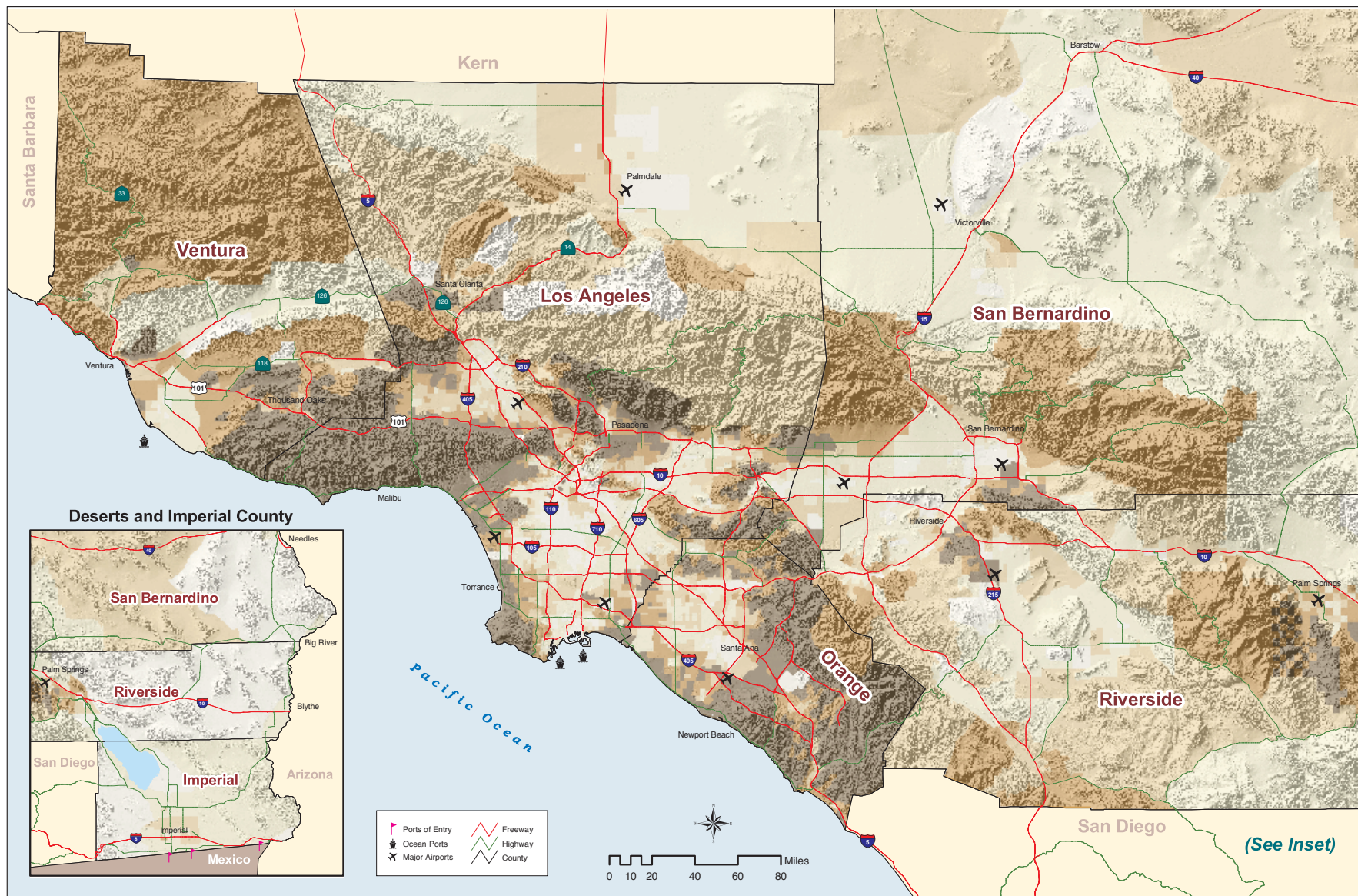
Deserts and Imperial County

40
Needles
San Bernardino
Big River
Palm Springs
Riverside
10
Blythe
San Diego
8
Imperial
Imperial
Arizona
Mexico

Ports of Entry
Ocean Ports
Major Airports
Freeway
Highway
County

N

Miles
0 10 20 40 60 80

Percent of Persons (25 Years and Over)
with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Census Tract

- 0% – 5%
- 6% – 15%
- 16% – 25%
- 26% – 40%
- 41% – 100%

Source: Census 2000,
Thomas Bros. Network

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
Persons With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION of
GOVERNMENTS

c:\=state_region2003 11/2003

THE STATE OF THE REGION 2003

Map 7